United Nations CRPD/CSP/2018/SR.4

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General
27 July 2018

Original: English

Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Eleventh session
New York, 12–14 June 2018

Summary record of the 4th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 13 June 2018, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Perera (Vice-President) ..... (Sri Lanka)

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In the absence of Mr. Panayotov (Bulgaria), Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 5: Matters related to the implementation of the Convention (*continued*)

(a) General debate (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Adamson** (European Union) said that all States members of the European Union were parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, following the ratification of the Convention by Ireland in 2018. In November 2017, the European Union and all its member States had adopted and proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights, which included a specific principle on the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their enjoyment of rights to income support, to services enabling their participation in the labour market and to adapted work environments. Disability was also mainstreamed in rights related to employment, education, equal opportunities, child care and child support, long-term care, housing and access to essential services.

2. By the end of 2018, the European Commission planned to reach agreement on a European Accessibility Act, which could potentially improve the access of persons with disabilities to products and services, in line with article 9 of the Convention. Significant efforts had also been invested in the dialogue with civil society and in awareness-raising activities, not least through the annual European Access City Award. Discussions were also under way to create a mechanism that would succeed the European Disability Strategy, which was due to expire in 2020.

3. The European Union provided professional training on the implementation of the Convention, including for persons with disabilities, their organizations and staff in European Union delegations. The European Union was committed to continuing to improve the situation of persons with disabilities and engaging with partners externally to promote the ratification and effective implementation and monitoring of the Convention worldwide.

4. **Ms. Elmansouri** (Tunisia) said that while it had been 10 years since the adoption of the Convention, persons with disabilities across the globe still suffered from discrimination and marginalization, especially women and girls with disabilities. Their situation was further complicated in times of conflict or humanitarian emergencies. If countries failed to implement the Convention, they would struggle to meet their obligations under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

5. Tunisia was working steadfastly to achieve the full inclusion of persons with disabilities and ensure that they were actively involved in all phases of the adoption and implementation of laws, strategies and programmes related to their rights. Law No. 83 adopted in August 2005 comprehensively addressed the protection, care and integration of persons with disabilities and served as the guiding framework in the development of relevant policies, plans, programmes and mechanisms. Tunisia had also carried out reforms to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoyed their fundamental rights enshrined in the Convention, including through national plans on disability prevention, accessibility and schooling and a programme on the employment of persons with disabilities. A system of quotas had also been established to guarantee the direct and equitable participation of persons with disabilities in the first free municipal elections held in Tunisia recently.

6. **Ms. Rubiales de Chamorro** (Nicaragua) said that under the Administration of President Ortega, Nicaragua had focused on the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly in the areas of equality, awareness, health and rehabilitation, education, employment and the improvement of infrastructure for accessible transport and public, private and community spaces. A major achievement had been the development of the "Voices for All" programme, under which persons with disabilities received an official card granting them access to priority care in public and private systems and half price tickets on transportation. The programme had been made possible through the support of Cuba and had provided for comprehensive care for nearly 300,000 persons with disabilities.

7. Under Nicaraguan law, persons with disabilities were entitled to claim allowances and housing and employment benefits, and to gain other advantages from government programmes. National disability day had been established on 25 August to raise awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities. Nicaragua also had a Special Ombudsman who was responsible for monitoring compliance with the Persons with Disabilities Act in public and private institutions.

8. **Ms. Maciejewska** (Poland) said that the objectives of the Polish disability policy had remained the same for 25 years: decent living conditions and equality in treatment, activities and accessibility. Increased spending on persons with disabilities over the past two years had resulted in the introduction of new solutions to improve the family life, professional activity, mobility and access to information of persons

with disabilities. Allocations to persons with disabilities and their caregivers had increased, especially in the past year. Development programmes in sheltered housing and support centre networks were favoured over institutionalized care. The "For Life" programme, adopted in 2016, contained a range of measures to assist persons with disabilities, including increased health-care coordination for women with complications in pregnancy and children with disabilities, a broader scope for family assistance, the establishment of local centres to support children with disabilities and assistance to family members wishing to return to work. The Accessibility Plus programme included various initiatives to improve access to public spaces, transportation, products and services.

9. A strategy for persons with disabilities was due for adoption in 2018 and would provide details on new policy guidelines, a detailed plan of action and a monitoring system. A new universal system for assessing disability and dependency levels was under development, with the aim of ensuring more individualized support. Further thought would also be given to the current use of shift work for caregivers and the development of a new rehabilitation model.

10. **Ms. Marchante** (Andorra) said that her Government had made various changes since the submission of its report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2017. In December of that year, the Government, assisted by organizations representing persons with disabilities, had approved a law containing urgent measures to harmonize national laws with the provisions of the Convention. Given that realization of the rights of persons with disabilities would involve all sectors of society, the Government had publicized texts on the rights enshrined the Convention in accessible formats and was providing mandatory training on the Convention to all staff of all public bodies.

11. The Network of Inclusive Companies was an initiative that encouraged private companies in Andorra to promote the rights and the independence of persons with disabilities. To date, 13 of the 99 companies contacted had joined the Network.

12. Since 2002, the Integra and Integra Plus programmes had helped children and young people with disabilities to enjoy the same conditions and extracurricular and leisure activities as others. A similar programme had recently been created for adults.

13. Andorra had an inclusive education system and had established numerous initiatives to guarantee full respect for the rights of persons with disabilities to education. Recent civil protection plans had specifically included the needs of persons with disabilities. The Government was currently working with parliament on a draft law on equality and non-discrimination to protect particularly vulnerable groups, not least persons with disabilities. It also planned to amend the election and referendum laws to guarantee persons with disabilities the same conditions for voting as others.

14. **Ms. Warwick** (Observer for the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People) said that there were 466 million hard-of-hearing people worldwide, including 34 million children. Some families with children who were hard of hearing prevented them from attending school to avoid social stigmatization, while some adults often did not disclose hearing loss for fear of losing their jobs. Unfortunately, many children who would benefit from cochlear implants did not receive them or received them only in one ear. Similarly, hearing aids, assistant hearing devices and amplification systems such as hearing loops were not nearly as available as they should be. The limited understanding of the needs of hard-of-hearing persons meant that captioning was sometimes not available for television content, Internet media and in meeting room situations. She welcomed initiatives by Sweden and the Netherlands to offer hard-of-hearing people captioning for their communication needs, as well as legislation introduced in Finland, Japan and the United States that required the captioning of certain television programmes.

15. **Ms. Gimolieca** (Angola) said that her Government had adopted a legal framework to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all areas of society. The Angolan Constitution stipulated that citizens with disabilities should enjoy full rights and be subject to the same duties, without prejudice or restrictions, and that the State must adopt national policies relating to the treatment, rehabilitation and integration of citizens with disabilities, the provision of support to their families, the elimination of obstacles to their mobility and the development of principles to raise citizens' awareness of their duties to include and respect persons with disabilities. The State also worked with civil society to promote and support special education, technical and vocational training, physical and social rehabilitation and the inclusion of citizens with disabilities. As vocational training and rehabilitation could boost the employment rate of persons with disabilities, which was crucial to improving the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, Angola had offered training courses to some 1,740 such persons between 2010 and 2017.

16. **Mr. Jo** Nam-kwon (Republic of Korea) said that the 2018 Paralympic Winter Games had been held in Pyeong Chang in the Republic of Korea. Building on the

experience of those Games, the Korean Government intended to continue the Paralympian spirit by establishing a united community in which disabilities were not obstacles.

17. Every five years since 1998, the Government had drawn up a comprehensive plan for persons with disabilities to cover a range of aspects of the lives of persons with disabilities. During the period of the most recent plan, it had increased the budget allocated to persons with disabilities and had enacted a number of important laws, such as the Law on the Protection of Rights and Support for Persons with Developmental Disabilities. In line with the Government's philosophy of creating an inclusive welfare State for all, it had launched its fifth comprehensive plan, which covered the period 2018–2022.

18 The Government was striving to carry out the 2030 Agenda and the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific through international cooperation on disability issues. It currently provided advice, particularly to countries in the Asia-Pacific region, on the collection of disability data. The Government would do its utmost to work with stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels to implement the Convention and build a society that left no one behind.

19. **Ms. Aalders** (Netherlands) said that her Government, having ratified the Convention in June 2016, had drawn up an implementation plan in 2017 and would submit its first report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in mid-2018. The Government would soon launch a national action plan to decrease the number of barriers faced by persons with disabilities in housing, sport, education, political participation, care and transport.

20. Her Government had already done a lot to improve the participation of the 2 million Dutch citizens who were blind, deaf or suffered from physical or mental disabilities or psychiatric disorders, particularly through cooperation with experts, municipalities, companies and sector-specific organizations. In the coming months, it would focus on developing, steering and monitoring a new set of indicators. It was also working closely with tens of thousands of employers' organizations and small and medium-sized enterprises in the retail and hospitality industries to help them ensure that their businesses and websites were accessible to persons with disabilities. The Government was directly supporting a group of 25 municipalities that were taking the lead in implementing the Convention at the local level.

21. **Mr. Makava** (Cambodia) said that the Convention should be implemented through a strong cooperative partnership between civil society and the private sector. The Government had increased employment opportunities for persons with disabilities working as civil servants and had mainstreamed the issue of women with disabilities in government policies and plans. A quota system had established that 1 per cent of all employees of businesses in Cambodia with more than 100 staff members must be persons with disabilities. Women with disabilities worked a reduced day of seven hours, enjoyed free health care and were entitled to equal pay to men. Each year, the Government invited 3,000 persons with disabilities to celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Persons with disabilities could vote and stand as candidates in national elections.

22. Cambodia attached considerable importance to the Convention and was currently preparing its National Disability Strategy Plan 2019–2023, which would focus on reducing poverty among persons with disabilities through work and employment schemes. Persons with disabilities were provided with social protection under the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016–2025. Cambodia had made significant progress in building an inclusive society and enhancing the well-being of persons with disabilities in line with its ongoing efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. In the future, it would work with the general community to promote even more inclusive practices in education, employment and society.

23. **Mr. Ja** Song Nam (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the human rights of all citizens of his country, including persons with disabilities, were protected under the national Constitution and relevant laws. Children with disabilities were required to attend secondary school education in the universal 12-year compulsory education system and the conditions for their study, life and medical treatment were covered while they were at school. Deaf and blind students received scholarship assistance. All persons with disabilities were entitled to free health care and orthopaedic apparatus, including prosthetic arms and legs. They enjoyed full civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights without any discrimination.

24. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea had adopted the Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities in June 2003. It had subsequently signed the Convention in July 2013 and had ratified it in November 2016. A working group had begun drafting the initial report on the implementation of the Convention, which was due for submission in 2019. In April 2018, the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea had decided that national efforts should be refocused on socialist economic improvements. The country was also

implementing a 2016–2020 strategy on national economic development that would enhance the implementation of the Convention. Given the importance of international cooperation in the implementation of the Convention, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had invited the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities to visit the country in May 2017 with a view to intensifying cooperation in that respect.

25. **Ms. Hervas** (Observer for the Agrenska Foundation), speaking also on behalf of the NGO Committee for Rare Diseases, said that individuals affected by rare diseases were frequently marginalized or invisible because they accounted for fewer than 1 in 2,000 people. However, rare diseases were often chronic, highly complex, progressive and severely disabling; they also decreased life expectancy and gave rise to specific care needs. A European-wide survey on the impact of rare diseases carried out by the Rare Barometer Programme in 2017 indicated that the overwhelming majority of the 300 million people worldwide living with rare diseases also had disabilities. Over 70 per cent of respondents stated that they had difficulties with motor or sensorial functions, more than 75 per cent faced limitations in activities of daily living, while many also struggled to receive recognition and compensation for their disability because they appeared healthy.

26. People living with rare diseases faced challenges in accessing health care and rehabilitation that should be addressed in line with articles 25 and 26 of the Convention. If the international community truly wished to maintain a human-rights based approach and followed the principle of leaving no one behind in the implementation of the Convention and the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, more attention must be paid to diverse rare diseases.

27. **Ms. Azlisha** (Malaysia) said that her Government considered the Convention to be an important instrument for improving gender equality and upholding the rights of persons with disabilities, especially in the context of Member States' commitments under the 2030 Agenda and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Following the general elections in May 2018, the Department of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development had taken over responsibility for disability issues and her Government had launched various programmes and activities to enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities. A management and information system for the advocacy and online registration of persons with disabilities had greatly improved the quality and targeting of services. The 469,377 individuals registered so far had benefited from more than 25 services offered by the Government and private sector. Under the Eleventh Malaysia Plan 2016–2020, the Government had continued its commitment to an inclusive development agenda, while reaffirming its belief that growth could not be measured by economic success alone. The Plan provided for the establishment of seven independent living centres across the country designed to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities. It had also resulted in the launching of a Business Encouragement Assistance Scheme that offered financial assistance to entrepreneurs with disabilities.

28. **Ms. Larsson** (Sweden) said that she welcomed the active involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations at the current meeting. Since the ratification of the Convention by Sweden in 2008, her country had made significant progress in enhancing the rights of women, men, boys and girls with disabilities. The Swedish parliament had agreed on a bill to modify the objective of the national disability policy in line with the Convention. The new objective was to increase equality in living conditions and achieve the full participation of persons with disabilities by focusing on universal design principles, existing gaps in accessibility for persons with disabilities, individual support for empowerment and the prevention of discrimination. Measures contained under the policy were in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and targets and reflected previous recommendations by the Committee. Her Government was fully committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, both internationally and nationally, and aimed to transfer the Goals and targets to the Swedish context in order to leave no one behind. The country's feminist Government welcomed the clear references in the 2030 Agenda to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

29. **Ms. Betham-Malielegaoi** (Samoa) said that her Government was committed to implementing, monitoring and reporting on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Incheon Strategy, the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and related instruments. Translating the provisions under those instruments into national actions and priorities should ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities would be met more swiftly.

30. Her Government had mainstreamed the disability agenda into its national strategy and had made the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities one of its national priorities. It had also incorporated the Washington Group Short Set of

Questions on Disability into the 2016 national census, with the aim of producing disaggregated data on persons with disabilities.

31. In December 2016, the Government had reviewed the compliance of its legislation with the Convention and had costed its plan for implementing the Convention. In the review, it had taken note of the discrimination faced by women with disabilities and the need to provide further protections not covered in existing legislation, including the prohibition of forced sterilization. The Samoan disability advocacy organization Nuanua o le Alofa had spearheaded efforts to raise community awareness of the Convention in Samoa and had advocated equal opportunities and the mainstreaming of the disability agenda in national laws, policies and programmes. The Samoan National Disaster Risk Management Plan 2016–2019 outlined further actions to strengthen the disability policy. The Government had also made the national construction code more inclusive and had introduced more services into the health sector for persons with mobility needs.

32. **Mr. Poudyal** (Nepal) said that the Convention was a milestone in the global community's efforts to define the rights of person with disabilities more clearly and had already brought about positive changes in attitudes and approaches. Nepal had ratified the Convention in 2009 and had submitted its initial report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD/C/NPL/1) in 2014. His Government had adopted a number of measures to ensure the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities, including the right to free education in Braille and sign languages; the prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities; the right to participate in State bodies on the basis of inclusive principles; and the right to social security. Under the Constitution, all political parties must include persons with disabilities among their roster of candidates for election to the Federal Parliament. In 2017, Nepal had replaced its previous Disability Rights Act and had redefined disability in line with the human rights model enshrined in the Convention. The new Act recognized the diverse forms of disability, included provisions on the elimination of the use of derogatory words and criminalized discrimination against persons with disabilities.

33. Nepal faced challenges in enforcing legal provisions related to persons with disabilities and also lacked facilities for such persons and adequate programmes to promote their employment or self-employment. As a least developed and landlocked country vulnerable to multiple disasters, Nepal needed more international support and technical assistance to meet its international obligations. International cooperation was equally important for forging collaboration with the civil society.

34. **Mr. Tan** (Singapore) said that his Government had invested in building a fair, inclusive and caring society in which persons with disabilities were recognized, empowered and granted every opportunity to achieve their potential and participate as full and contributing members of society. Every five years since 2007, the Government had issued a national road map containing the country's disability policies and its implementation plan for the Convention. The first two road maps had strengthened support for persons with disabilities in the areas of early intervention, education, employment, mobility and accessibility, health care and the use of assistive technology. The third road map, which was currently under way, had been developed jointly by the public, private and people sectors and included some $400 million in annual investments in new initiatives.

35. A bill on vulnerable adults had been adopted to allow the Government to act more swiftly to protect adults suffering from, or at risk of, abuse and neglect, in cases where family and community interventions were inadequate. The Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children supported children with moderate to severe developmental delays. The SG Enable agency had been set up in 2013 to facilitate employment for, and provide job support to, persons with disabilities. For a decade, the Government and SG Enable had piloted a programme of customized support and training for students with complex and diverse disability profiles transitioning from school to working life. Health-care subsidies allowed all Singaporeans, including persons with disabilities, to access the medical services that they needed.

36. **Ms. Ilagan** (Observer for Rehabilitation International) said that over the 10 years since the Convention had come into force, the perception of disability had improved and there was greater recognition of disability issues as the key to leaving no one behind. Nevertheless, the fact that fewer persons with disabilities from the global South were participating in meetings in New York owing to a lack of financial resources was a cause of great concern. States parties should allocate more resources to that end and pay particular attention to assisting persons with disabilities from developing countries. Effective and well-coordinated mechanisms were also important in order to carry out the policy reforms needed to achieve the vision set out in the Convention. States parties ultimately had the power to ensure that active and ongoing engagements for change were backed not only by good intentions but also by financial resources.

37. **Ms. Chacón** (Costa Rica) said that protection of human rights was enshrined in the national Constitution. In October 2018, the country would carry out its first survey on disability, which would incorporate the parameters of the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability. The Government had also amended legislation to grant all Costa Ricans both legal capacity and physical access to vote in presidential elections.

38. The Convention would be fully implemented only if persons with disabilities were involved in the drafting, execution and evaluation of laws and policies affecting them. It was also crucial to mainstream their experiences and perspectives in reports on compliance with relevant regulations. Costa Rica was working on strengthening mechanisms to guarantee that persons with disabilities and organizations defending their rights were consulted meaningfully.

39. **Ms. Rivas Asenjo** (Chile) said that although Chile had made major advances in its inclusion of persons with disabilities, considerable work lay ahead. The newly elected Administration sought to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities by, inter alia: enhancing their freedom and independence; taking on the responsibility of eliminating barriers and creating a fully inclusive society; ensuring decent conditions for all; allowing persons with disabilities to become agents of change by involving them in dialogue on their rights and duties; and coordinating intersectoral policies, programmes and actions. Chile was thus empowering its National Disability Service to coordinate the disability policies of all public bodies.

40. Nevertheless, the design and implementation of appropriate public policies for persons with disabilities depended on reliable information. Chile carried out national disability surveys, had held a census in 2016 and maintained a national disability registry. However, the census did not include specific measures on disabilities and the registry was unreliable for formulating disability policies and programmes, since it currently included only 10 per cent of persons with disabilities. Chile was therefore working on a National Assessment and Certification Plan, known as the "Disability Map", to coordinate all public and private entities and organizations of persons with disabilities that were competent to assess disability status. There were also plans to facilitate the certification process and make data collection more efficient, in compliance with article 31 of the Convention.

41. **Ms. Swaffer** (Observer for Dementia Alliance International), noting that many national health-care systems excluded data on citizens over 60 years of age and collected more data on men than on women and girls, said that high-quality and disaggregated disability statistics were crucial. The disaggregation of data by disability, sex and age, especially in lower-middle-income countries and remote communities, was particularly useful in the development of inclusive policies that focused on human rights. Persons with disabilities due to forms of dementia, especially Alzheimer's disease, were often undercounted in national statistics and had more limited access to redress simply because they received diagnoses in later life.

42. In their implementation and monitoring of the Convention, States parties must take into account the 50 million people worldwide living with dementia, most of whom were living in lower- and middle-income countries. Governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society and organizations of persons with disabilities should also provide the financial support needed for people living with dementia to attend meetings on matters affecting them.

43. **Ms. Grigoryan** (Armenia) said that the Government had begun bringing national legislation and policies into line with the Convention following its ratification in 2010. In June 2017, it had approved a draft law on the protection of the rights and the promotion of the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, which had subsequently been extensively reviewed by non-governmental organizations, specialists and persons with disabilities during parliamentary hearings. The draft law would be submitted for a second reading once all recommendations from the hearings had been considered.

44. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme, had carried out a project to enhance access to services and the participation of persons with disabilities in line with the principles of the Convention and the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health of the World Health Organization. The aim had been to shift from a medical to a rights-based model of disability assessment in order to improve targeting of support services and create an environment of equal participation. The new model had been successfully tested, with organizations that worked with persons with disabilities invited to participate. For the first time, the model empowered the applicant to directly contribute to the decision-making process through self-assessment. The model had been incorporated into the 2017 government programme for nationwide implementation. The Government had also approved the Comprehensive Plan on the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2017–2021. The

Plan was based on the Convention and would serve as the primary social inclusion policy for the next five years.

45. **Ms. Longcroft** (Observer for the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)) said that WIPO was working to increase access to knowledge and educational opportunities for the 253 million people worldwide with visual impairments. The Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled, adopted in 2013, provided the legal framework for the production and transfer of accessible books across national boundaries. To date, it had been ratified by 39 States.

46. One initiative to implement the Marrakesh Treaty was the Accessible Books Consortium, which had been launched in 2014. A public-private partnership led by WIPO, the Consortium brought together organizations representing persons who were print disabled, such as the World Blind Union; libraries for the blind; standards bodies; organizations representing authors and publishers; and collective management organizations. Its goal was to increase the number of books available worldwide in accessible formats. Since June 2014, the Consortium had established projects in 12 developing and least developed countries to provide training, technical assistance and funding for the production of accessible educational materials in national languages and had funded the production of over 4,500 educational materials for primary, secondary and university students. The Consortium had also developed an online database of accessible books, known as the ABC Global Book Service, through which participating libraries could request accessible digital books without needing to receive authorization from copyright owners. Over 205,000 library-to-library loans had been made to date, and with the upcoming implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty by the European Union on 11 October 2018, a further 270,000 titles would be added.

47. States should support such initiatives by acceding to the Marrakesh Treaty, providing training and funding for the production of accessible books and facilitating the involvement of their national libraries and organizations in the Global Book Service. The Marrakesh Treaty and the Accessible Books Consortium were strategically aligned with the Convention and the 2030 Agenda, especially Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education.

(b) Round table discussions (*continued*):

(ii) Women and girls with disabilities

48. *Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka), Vice-President, and Ms. Agarwal (civil society) presided as Co-Chairs.*

49. **Mr. Perera** (Sri Lanka), Co-Chair, said that the theme of women and girls with disabilities was a key element of upholding human rights and ensuring inclusive development for persons with disabilities. Persistent cultural, social, legal, physical and institutional barriers prevented the full inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in all areas of public and private life. They were often denied the right to have a family, and a lack of access to transportation, justice and communications compounded their isolation and exclusion. The round table offered an opportunity to discuss some of the key challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities and to share good practices that advanced their human rights and promoted their full inclusion and participation, thus mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities within sustainable development strategies.

50. Participants should consider the following issues: how to leverage general comment No. 3 (2016) of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General Assembly resolution 72/162, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international frameworks to support the implementation of article 6 of the Convention; laws and policies that protected the rights of women and girls with disabilities and practices that reduced inequalities; the role played by local stakeholders in the development of disability-inclusive humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction, and how their expertise could support capacity-building within organizations of women and girls with disabilities in crisis-affected areas; the strategies that should be put in place so that global women's rights movements could mainstream the rights of women and girls with disabilities and foster their participation; and how Governments, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations and other stakeholders could contribute to the ongoing efforts to improve monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Convention and the 2030 Agenda and ensure that no woman or girl was left behind.

51. **Ms. Mohamed** (Mombasa County Assembly, Kenya), panellist, accompanying her statement with a digital slide presentation, said that 46 per cent of females with disabilities in Kenya were under 15 years of age. Many hospitals were not accessible to women with disabilities, and a change in mentality was needed, since people were often shocked when a pregnant

woman with a disability arrived at a hospital, yet everyone had the right to love, to get married and to have a baby. Owing to a lack of employment opportunities, many women with disabilities lived in poverty in Kenya and job creation was therefore vital to their empowerment.

52. The Government of Kenya had put in place policies to address the challenges faced by women with disabilities. For example, the National Gender and Equality Commission was enforcing nomination rules regarding affirmative action for women in the Senate, the National Assembly and county assemblies. Even so, only two women had been nominated to county assemblies. Government initiatives to improve the standard of living of persons with disabilities in Kenya included a national development fund, a women's enterprise fund, free primary education and a cash transfer programme for persons with severe disabilities.

53. Three main bodies had responsibilities within the national implementation and monitoring mechanism: the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, the National Gender and Equality Commission, and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities. All three were funded by the Government, but clarity was needed on which agency was the focal point for disability matters in the country.

54. **Ms. Juan López** (National Council for the Development and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, Mexico), panellist, said that 6 per cent of the population in Mexico lived with some kind of disability, 53 per cent of whom were women. During the presidency of Enrique Peña Nieto, progress had been made on developing good practices that reduced inequality, and on laws and policies that upheld the rights of women and girls with disabilities. Mexico had adopted a law for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, a general law on the rights of children and adolescents, and a gender equality law. For the first time, a gender perspective had been mainstreamed in the national development plan for the period 2013–2018. Such mainstreaming was mandatory and had its own budget.

55. The national programme for the development and inclusion of persons with disabilities was evaluated every two years. Between 2014 and 2016, health-care, education and workplace access had all increased for persons with disabilities. A national child and adolescent protection system had been set up, together with child protection offices in each of the federative entities. A total of 38 centres offered legal, medical and psychological support to women, including to women with disabilities. Units in the federative entities provided specialized support to women and girls who had suffered from violence, abuse, abandonment or exploitation. Of the women and girls who had visited such units, 7 per cent had a disability. In conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme and UNICEF, Mexico had developed a programme to care for children with disabilities whose mothers worked. A total of 10,000 establishments had been set up, from which 6,000 children had benefited. Mexico promoted humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction through its national civil protection programme, which contained specific provisions regarding the needs of persons with disabilities during humanitarian emergencies and other high-risk situations. Implementation of the programme was mandatory and priority was given to women with disabilities.

56. To monitor implementation of the 2030 Agenda and ensure that no woman or girl was left behind, Mexico had set up a national council and a national strategy, throughout which a gender perspective had been mainstreamed. Mexico had incorporated the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability into its surveys, and had drawn on beneficiary registers from the health and social development sectors to create a national register of persons with disabilities, which would enable statistical analysis to be performed. Many significant challenges remained before the needs of women with disabilities would be met. In particular, women and girls with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities must have legal capacity and the opportunity to live independently; and programmes on healthy ageing must be developed, given that the number of women with disabilities was rising owing to population ageing.

57. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** (National Organization of the Blind, Spain), panellist, welcomed the recent election to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of six women experts. She was also profoundly grateful, in the name of all women and girls with disabilities, for the opportunity to participate at last in the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Women with disabilities wanted to participate in the development of women's policies and in the entities upholding women's rights. They did not want to be left behind. One in five women, or 600 million women worldwide, had a disability, even if they did not have a certificate to prove it.

58. Upholding the rights of women and girls with disabilities was a challenge in three spheres of policymaking. All policies must bear gender in mind, policies for children must consider girls with disabilities, but, most fundamentally, policies for women must take account of women with disabilities. However, that would require the full participation of

women and girls with disabilities through their representative organizations. In many countries, women with disabilities were still unable to participate in the political process. It was impossible to believe that so many women with disabilities did not have their own representative organizations at the national, regional and global levels. They must be able to participate in both women's organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities, but they also had the right to set up their own organizations. She called on the Conference of States Parties and civil society organizations to give women and girls with disabilities the opportunity to be considered as equals and to have their own voices heard.

59. **Ms. Degener** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), panellist, said that gender was mainstreamed throughout the Convention and that article 6 thereof was the first binding international human rights provision to address intersectional discrimination. That twin-track approach had been the result of strong lobbying by an international coalition of organizations representing women with disabilities and supportive government delegations to the ad hoc committee that had drafted the Convention. It was one of the many examples of successful cooperation between civil society and Governments during the negotiations.

60. As the former facilitator of article 6 and the current Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, she felt that women and girls with disabilities were the group that had derived the most normative benefit from the adoption of the Convention. However, the value added in terms of international human rights standards had not materialized with respect to implementation policy during the first decade of the Convention. On the contrary, women and girls with disabilities continued to be left behind in almost all areas of implementation. However, there was hope: having been the only female expert on the Committee after the 2016 election, she was delighted by the results of the 2018 election. She was also extremely pleased that Ms. Ana Peláez Narváez was the first woman with a disability to have been elected as an expert to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

61. In terms of action that could be taken to prevent women with disabilities from being left behind, general comment No.3 (2016) of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities could be leveraged to support the implementation of the Convention. It identified three priority areas: combating violence; upholding reproductive autonomy and sexual health rights; and eradicating multiple discrimination. Existing national legislation in those areas must be reviewed and amended if needed, or new laws must be enacted. In addition, affirmative action for the development, advancement and empowerment of all women and girls with disabilities needed to be taken, particularly with respect to access to justice, protecting the right to legal capacity and developing gender-sensitive decision-making measures. Furthermore, action was needed to eliminate violence and abuse and to uphold the right to privacy and sexual and reproductive autonomy. It was also important to collect and analyse appropriate data in that regard. Women and girls with disabilities must be recognized and supported in the areas of political participation and national fiscal space, public-private partnerships and international cooperation. Regarding political participation, the Committee had just adopted communication No. 19/2014, which concerned the right of a woman with a disability to take part in elections on an equal basis with others, as enshrined in article 29 of the Convention. She asked those present to look at that new jurisprudence.

62. **Ms. Umoh** (Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities, Nigeria), panellist, said that it was well established that women with disabilities experienced multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and the Conference participants had gathered together with the aim of changing that ugly narrative. Among other topics, the panellists had been asked to consider strategies that should be developed in order for global women's rights movements and agendas to mainstream the rights of women and girls with disabilities and to foster their participation. However, before such strategies could be designed, it was vital to understand why women and girls with disabilities were not being included in the women's movement.

63. In 2013, she had presented her candidature for a leadership role in a mainstream women's movement in Nigeria, in which not many women with disabilities participated. She had met with considerable resistance, but had won because she had known how to act effectively in that particular environment. Capacity must be built within organizations representing women and girls with disabilities, while understanding that it was a different environment to the disability movement or the women's movement. A network of women and girls with disabilities should be funded and supported, to ensure they understood what it meant to work in the mainstream women's movement. In addition, it was important to increase collaboration and communication between women's rights movements and disability rights, to strengthen partnerships and increase diversity. Most importantly, a safe space was needed for the effective participation of women and girls with

disabilities. Without the courage, strength and knowledge needed to navigate the mainstream women's movement, women with disabilities may end up excluded. The women's movement had yet to understand the issues of women with disabilities, and its approach could be very patronizing. Donor agencies and funds should also be consulted about the possibility of inserting a clause in the funding criteria that would enable women and girls with disabilities to participate effectively.

64. The recent election of a woman with a disability to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for the first time and the election of six women to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities demonstrated heightened international commitment and greater prioritization of women and girls with disabilities, but those elections were merely the first step. Thanks to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the commitment to leave no one behind, a more realistic approach to the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities was being taken. The international community had recognized that reducing the inequality experienced by women and girls with disabilities was a priority and that the issue should be mainstreamed throughout sustainable development strategies. The 2030 Agenda had also raised awareness about the lack of data on persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls. There was a collective responsibility to gather more data and increase their visibility.

65. **Ms. Lee** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)), panellist, said that the international community needed to recognize that it was failing women and girls with disabilities. Laws, policies and practices continued to expound singular approaches and frameworks that dismissed multiple and intersecting facets of their identities. As a result, women and girls with disabilities missed out on the positive measures available to women and girls generally, which widened the gap and entrenched their exclusion.

66. A lack of access to justice reinforced the exclusion of women and girls with disabilities across all sectors. It was clear from a recent OHCHR study that the justice system often failed persons with disabilities, including women, because it did not always remedy inequality and may even ingrain it. For instance, complaints may not be accepted from women or girls with disabilities who were deprived of their legal capacity. Similarly, their complaints or testimony may be dismissed or discounted because such persons were not considered to be credible or competent witnesses. Many women and girls with disabilities were therefore discouraged from seeking help, leaving rights violations unexposed and unremedied. Action must therefore be taken in close consultation with a range of women and girls with disabilities and their representative organizations to repeal discriminatory practices and uphold the equal legal standing and the participation of women and girls with disabilities in investigations and judicial proceedings. Furthermore, there must be a possibility to invoke multiple and intersecting grounds of discrimination, which should proportionately determine liability, sanctions and redress.

67. Within the sphere of access to justice and beyond, data collection and consultation played a critical role in ensuring an intersectional approach, recognizing and capturing the uniqueness of one's experiences of discrimination, and ensuring that they were addressed and redressed. In the case of involuntary treatment and detention, intersecting forms of discrimination had resulted in some of the most serious human rights violations, which had disproportionately affected women with disabilities.

68. There was growing evidence of higher rates of guardianship and forced treatment of women with psychosocial disabilities and women with intellectual disabilities, which was a cause for considerable alarm. In May, the Human Rights Council had held a consultation on promoting human rights in mental health. Human rights experts, practitioners in mental health services and persons with psychosocial disabilities had made it clear that such practices and the legal frameworks that enabled them should no longer exist. Participants had also expressed their opposition to the drafting by the Council of Europe of an Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine concerning the protection of human rights and dignity of persons with mental disorders, which was not compliant with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. States parties should not be promoting the adoption of new instruments or legislation that undermined their obligations under the Convention. OHCHR called on States parties to the Convention to fulfil their obligations and to engage in meaningful consultation with the rights holders concerned. Good practices on eliminating coercion and ensuring support to live independently and to be included in the community were emerging all over the world, including in Europe, thanks to the momentum created by the Convention. Retrogressive initiatives put a brake on innovation and good practices and ran counter to the wider human rights and development agenda.

69. It was important to recognize and eliminate the risks that continued to subjugate women and girls with disabilities, and to work together to raise their voices

and be led by them in transforming communities into inclusive ones. OHCHR stood ready to support States parties in those efforts.

70. **Ms. Diaz Aguirre** (Panama) said that her Government had taken numerous steps to ensure that women were able to enjoy all human rights in full, including the provision of free legal services to women who had been victims of violence and the establishment of a network to monitor the fulfilment of the equal opportunities plan and the related laws. The "Fami-Empresas" project provided access to capital for indigenous women and women living in rural areas so that they could set up sustainable microenterprises and become economically independent. The Electoral Code had recently been amended to modernize and democratize the electoral system and ensure that women were able to participate in elections on an equal basis. Under Act No. 56 of 2017, at least 30 per cent of all posts in central Government, decentralized institutions and State-owned enterprises must be filled by women. Furthermore, women accounted for 61 per cent of the members of the Governing Board of the National Disability Secretariat. They were responsible for ensuring equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and their families, so that decision-making supported gender equality and women's empowerment.

71. In compliance with the provisions of the Convention on collecting data for the formulation and implementation of disability policies, her Government had set up a platform to operationalize the national system for statistics on persons with disabilities. The platform, which would centralize all information from institutions running programmes for persons with disabilities and their families, represented a significant step forward in meeting their needs.

72. **Ms. Duncan** (Canada) said that her Government was deeply committed to the empowerment of women and girls and the promotion and protection of their human rights. She welcomed the election of more women to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

73. Canada recognized the compounding nature of the discrimination and barriers faced by women and girls with disabilities and was increasingly using an intersectional approach in its policy and programme development. Its Gender-based Analysis Plus tool recognized that experiences were shaped by identity factors such as gender. Having collected valuable data on women with disabilities and on gender equality, her Government had recently set up a new centre for gender, diversity and inclusion statistics.

74. In 2017 her Government had adopted a feminist international assistance policy, which would focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized, including women and girls with disabilities. At the Group of Seven summit only a few days prior, Canada, together with a number of other countries, the European Union and the World Bank, had announced an unprecedented investment of almost $3.8 billion Canadian dollars to support quality education for women and girls living in crisis, conflict-affected and fragile States. When women and girls were given equal opportunities to succeed they could be powerful agents of change, drive stronger economic growth, encourage greater peace and cooperation, and improve quality of life for their families and their communities.

75. **Ms. Dhadda** (Observer for Jaipur Foot) said that her perspective on life had been changed in December 2017, when she had met a 10-year-old girl, Geeta, who had come to Jaipur Foot to be fitted for a prosthetic leg. Geeta was only one of the 1.7 million people who had received a prosthetic from Jaipur Foot, regardless of caste, creed or colour and completely free of charge. She had lost her leg after being run over by a tractor and did not go to school because her family could not afford it and because other children made fun of her disability. Her new prosthetic, together with some fundraising, had opened the door to education and participation in society. It was hard for girls to ensure their voices were heard; how much harder it must be when they were living with a disability and the resulting discrimination. There were many similar stories, yet it did not take much to make a difference. Jaipur Foot was an inspirational organization changing lives with technologically advanced prosthetics that cost under $70. It was vital to create meaningful change in the world and to empower one another, one education at a time, one artificial limb at a time and one girl at a time.

76. **Ms. Houbolt** (Observer for Women with Disabilities Australia) said that, if women and girls were not to be left behind in the implementation of the Convention, States parties must recognize their diversity. Women and girls with disabilities experienced multiple intersecting forms of discrimination that must be addressed in laws and policies at the national and international levels.

77. States parties should also reject anything that contravened the Convention, and her organization was extremely concerned that the contents of the proposed Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine constituted a human rights violation. Women with disabilities, especially those with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, were most at risk of forced medical treatment. She called for

involuntary sterilization to be criminalized. If the Additional Protocol were adopted, it would risk setting an international precedent. The bodies of persons with disabilities should not be invaded and the rights enshrined in the Convention were worth fighting for.

78. **Ms. Al Qassimi** (United Arab Emirates) said that discussion of the topic of girls with disabilities was timely and necessary as States forged ahead with implementation of the Convention and the 2030 Agenda. Efforts to create a fully inclusive society in her country were based on empowerment, since persons with disabilities, especially women and girls, had the drive and commitment to determine their own future and contribute to their communities. The United Arab Emirates had launched a national strategy for the empowerment of persons with disabilities, which recognized the unique role of women and girls in contributing to national development. At all levels of employment, her country supported the development of skills; however, everything began with education, and special access was guaranteed for women and girls early on. The Ministry of Education and Community Development worked with service providers and educational institutions to ensure that students with disabilities had the best opportunities to achieve academic success. Family empowerment was the key to inclusion.

79. **Ms. Porrero** (European Union) said that 27.5 per cent of women in the European Union declared a disability, versus 23 per cent of men. The data also showed that women and girls with disabilities were systematically disadvantaged in terms of poverty risk and employment compared with men with disabilities, while the educational gap between girls with disabilities and those without was persistent. European legislation provided protection against gender discrimination in employment and services and discrimination on the basis of disability in the area of employment.

80. The data on violence was of particular concern, since 34 per cent of women with disabilities reported experiencing physical and sexual partner violence. The upcoming accession by the European Union to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence should contribute to reducing those figures.

81. Four of the 20 principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights were linked to gender equality and women with disabilities. Gender equality, including the situation of women and girls with disabilities, was also a priority in the European Union's external activities; a gender analysis was compulsory for all development cooperation projects and programmes.

82. The European Union was convinced of the importance of addressing gender-specific issues in the disability agenda as well as mainstreaming disability matters throughout the gender agenda. Since they were potentially competing issues, it was important to find a win-win approach.

83. **Ms. Huovinen** (Finland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that girls and young women with disabilities were often excluded from relevant discussions and experienced multiple forms of discrimination, all of which affected their self-esteem. Full and effective consultation on matters such as education, labour, political participation and sexual and reproductive health was essential. It would be useful to learn about best practices in which girls and young women with disabilities were fully involved in policymaking.

84. **Ms. Chacón** (Costa Rica) said that women with disabilities in Costa Rica, including herself, had needed to advocate for their inclusion in the development of public policies, programmes and plans, as the Convention required. Awareness had been raised within the National Council for Persons with Disabilities of the fact that, when disability was addressed solely from the perspective of "persons", it did not take into account the different measures that may be needed for women and girls. In addition, it had been stressed to the National Women's Institute and other public institutions that programmes for women and girls in Costa Rica were also for women and girls with disabilities. Women with disabilities had been included in the national gender equality policy adopted in May 2018 and the Minister for Women had expressly committed to mainstreaming the subject of women and girls with disabilities throughout all the related plans and programmes. Specific measures for women with disabilities could also be found throughout the action plan developed to implement the national family violence prevention plan. Although challenges clearly remained, the progress made to date would not have been possible without the efforts of women with disabilities and their participation should be supported by States parties.

85. **Ms. Pearce** (Observer for the Women's Refugee Commission) said that her organization worked to promote the rights of all displaced women, children and young people, including those with disabilities. It focused on preventing gender-based violence, ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services, and promoting socioeconomic empowerment in humanitarian settings. Humanitarian crises brought enormous risks for women and girls, and the skills and potential of women and girls with disabilities were often overlooked in such environments. Her organization

worked with them to identify gaps and come up with ways to improve humanitarian practice. It collaborated with a growing network of national and local organizations representing women with disabilities in conflict-affected countries. Such women could make life-saving contributions, including by raising awareness of disability issues among traditional humanitarian actors and monitoring basic protection concerns in the population. The organizations also supported global commitments to strengthen the links between humanitarian and development efforts.

86. The guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action being developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee would mark a significant step forward. However, to ensure non-discrimination, the guidelines must be gender-sensitive and recognize the leadership role that groups representing women with disabilities could play in humanitarian action. She would like to see traditional humanitarian actors seeking technical advice from organizations representing women with disabilities, and international organizations recruiting women with disabilities; for that to happen, donors needed to increase funding to representative organizations led by women to cover their operational costs in those contexts. The Women's Refugee Commission stood ready to support States parties in integrating those priorities.

87. **Ms. Manboubeh-Khalough** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, even prior to its accession to the Convention in 2009, the Islamic Republic of Iran had enacted a comprehensive law in 2003 that supported the rights of persons with disabilities through the elimination of discrimination and enhanced social engagement. For greater consistency with the provisions of the Convention and the human rights-based approach, a revised law had been adopted by the Iranian parliament in 2018. In May 2018, with the support of the Iranian State welfare organization, a café had been opened in Tehran that was staffed by persons with Down syndrome and autism, including girls.

88. **Ms. Orefellen** (Observer for the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry), speaking also on behalf of the Center for the Human Rights of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, said that women and girls with disabilities were known to experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence, including forced medical and psychiatric interventions. Intrusive medical practices such as forced sterilization, forced electroshock treatment and solitary confinement were widespread and some were used more frequently on women. In addition, some practices were more traumatizing for women who had suffered from sexual or other violence. Research showed that many women and girls in psychiatric units had experienced violence or abuse earlier in their lives. Violence against women and their reactions to it often became an entry point to coercive psychiatric measures. A psychiatric diagnosis could take away women's power to name their own experiences and create a basis for mental health detention and forced treatment. Such violent acts were authorized by domestic laws, and were therefore not recognized as acts of violence or ill-treatment and went unpunished. Women and girls with disabilities were not only being left behind but were also frequently being locked up, segregated from society and deprived of all possibilities for inclusion and participation.

89. States parties could not talk credibly about leaving no one behind and inclusion without unlocking the doors to mental health facilities. There could be no full equality without respect for physical and mental integrity or the right to freedom from sexual and psychiatric violence. The Council of Europe's proposed Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine was of great concern, since it authorized mental health detention and non-consensual psychiatric treatment. It did not protect rights and dignity but rather legitimized grave human rights violations and discriminated against persons with psychosocial disabilities. The adoption of that instrument would certainly and deliberately leave them behind and all human rights bodies and States parties must prevent that outcome. In the meantime, States parties could take inspiration from other regional mechanisms.

90. **Ms. Almofadhi** (Saudi Arabia) said that the education she had received at her specialist school had enabled her to pursue her personal dream, and she had been offered a permanent job there after graduation. She had been able to participate in many events that supported women with disabilities, including as a student speaker at an event organized by the national Down Syndrome Society. She was very grateful to her parents and her country for their continual guidance and support.

91. **Ms. Manombe-Ncube** (Namibia) said that disability was not gender neutral. All women and girls faced inequality, but especially women and girls with disabilities owing to discrimination and social norms and perceptions. In partnership with UNICEF, Namibia had embarked on a region-wide assessment to examine the challenges faced by children with disabilities, especially girls. The aim was to ensure that the 2013 sectoral policy on inclusive education addressed their needs and to come up with real solutions to fill any gaps. She wondered how States could ensure strong self-esteem and self-actualization among women and

girls living in rural areas. Lastly, she observed that women with disabilities were not included in the Commission on the Status of Women and that they did not attend its sessions.

92. **Ms. Panasiuk** (Ukraine) said that national gender policies, such as the one currently being developed by Ukraine, should be inclusive and should not make a distinction between women who had disabilities and those who did not. Women and girls should have the opportunity to attend classes, not only at school but also through external courses, on how to represent their rights and increase their involvement in political and decision-making processes. Indeed, to be successful in the competitive modern world, women could not afford to retreat into themselves but must show solidarity with one another. In Ukraine, the "Shkola Zenskoy Politiki" programme had helped women with disabilities to share their experiences with women who had not lived with disabilities.

93. **Mr. Perera** (Sri Lanka), Co-Chair, said that even though the Convention provided added value to the human rights agenda of the United Nations in the context of the situation of women and girls, the initial phase of its implementation had fallen short of expectations. The election of new members to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities offered renewed hope that the specific requirements of women and girls with disabilities would be fully taken into consideration in the context of the implementation of the Convention.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.